



**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,
Ways and Means Committee
January 21, 2025**

HB0052: UNFAVORABLE

Election Law - Voting Age - Board of Education Elections (Your School, Your Voice Act)

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) opposes **Election Law - Voting Age - Board of Education Elections (Your School, Your Voice Act)**.

HB0052 is a constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly to give local county governments the authority to lower the voting age in the election of county Board of Education members. If enacted by the local county government, an individual who is at least 16 years of age may vote for the Board of Education.

Currently the minimum age for voting in general elections for offices in Maryland is 18. As representatives of the educational system, our Board members see the importance of learning about the voting responsibilities of citizens as well as involving students in governmental processes at a young age. The Board encourages active student participation in the work of the Board through the position of Student Member of the Board of Education. Students in secondary schools get the opportunity to appoint the Student Member of the Board through a democratic process each spring. This learning experience prepares students for the current constitutional voting age of 18, which should apply uniformly to all offices.

For school systems that have this type of appointment of the Student Member of the Board, a change to this law would give 16 to 18-year-old high school students unprecedented voting rights since they are able to cast votes in elections for elected school board members as well as the student member. This would give them voting rights that adults who are no longer enrolled in the school system would not have.

For these reasons, we urge an UNFAVORABLE report of HB0052 from this Committee.